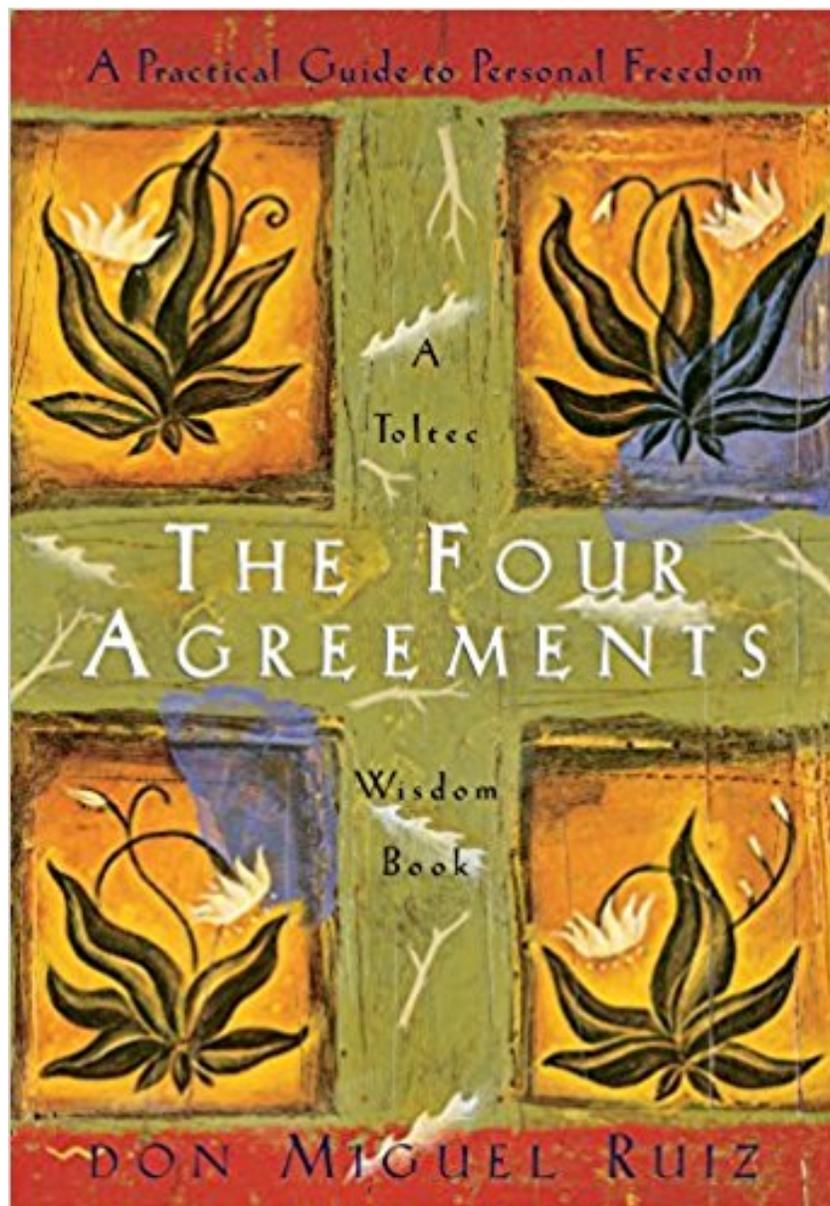


*The*  
***Four Agreements***  
*Reading Guide*



# Created for the members of the Thrive Within Virtual Book Circle

## **Introduction: The Smokey Mirror**

### **Summary:**

Three thousand years ago, a man had an “awakening” in which he realized that all humans are nothing but love and light. Yet, when he tried to show that to other humans, they couldn’t see themselves as the love and light because of the smoke that was in the way, and preventing the light from reflecting. The smoke is like the DREAM that prevents humans from seeing who and what they really are.

### **Questions:**

- Do you agree or disagree with the notion that we are all LOVE and LIGHT?
- If you did believe that all people were made of LOVE and LIGHT, how would that change your circumstances and world?
- What do you think you would need to do to dissipate the smoke and fog, so you could see the LOVE and LIGHT within you, and also within others?

## **Chapter One: Domestication and the Dream of the Planet**

### **Summary:**

We are currently living in a DREAM and that dream is made up of all the “rules” that we live by every day. Over time, with attention and repetition, those rules have been reinforced and have become the “truth” of how things must be done. We continue to perpetuate the spreading of these rules through the use of punishment and rewards, and we judge others based on how well they adhere to these rules. It’s a belief system that we didn’t choose to believe.

The BOOK OF LAW is what these rules tell us we must do, and we believe it to be the TRUTH. The JUDGE decided whether we are behaving in accordance with the BOOK OF LAW. The VICTIM carries on the BOOK OF LAW through blame, shame, and guilt.

Our lives and our society have all been created out of FEAR—the fear of not being PERFECT or GOOD ENOUGH, and we beat up others and ourselves for not meeting the standards.

By adopting the FOUR AGREEMENTS, you create the power to dramatically shift your experience with the old beliefs.

### Questions:

- Given the current belief systems of society, and within your personal world (family, religion, etc.), are there any beliefs that you would rather not believe?
- Ruiz talks extensively about how we are “domesticated” like animals. What do you think of this idea?
- What are the rewards and punishments that your community used to get you to adhere to its beliefs?
- What do you think life would be like if we didn’t have rewards and punishments?
- If you are not your mom and dad’s beliefs, then who are you?
- Ruiz describes our beliefs as the BOOK OF LAW, what does your book say? What are the rules that you impose on yourself?
- Justice is paying for your mistakes, but Ruiz mentions how we often pay doubly, and we ask others to pay doubly as well. Have you paid doubly for any of your mistakes? What were you hoping would happen by continuing to punish yourself?
- “We are living in the dream of hell.” What do you think of this idea that we are living in hell?
- “We have the need to be right and to make others wrong.” Who are you currently making wrong in your life? What would change if there was no right or wrong?
- “Just being ourselves is the biggest fear of humans?” (page 17) Do you agree? Are you afraid to be yourself?
- Ruiz says that we avoid rejection because we do not accept ourselves. Do you avoid rejection? What are you afraid of by being rejected?
- How have you, or do you abuse yourself?
- How do you practice self-love?

## **Chapter Two: The First Agreement**

### **BE IMPECCABLE WITH YOUR WORD**

#### **Summary:**

Your word is the most powerful tool that you have, and goes beyond just the sound or speech that comes from your mouth. Your word is also WHO YOU ARE. Your world has the power to destroy, as well as the power to create, so it is important to reflect on what you are doing with your word.

Impeccable, comes from Latin and means “without sin,” so being impeccable with your words means ensuring that your words do not go against yourself, as “sin” means to go against yourself (not what many religions teach). Being impeccable means taking personal responsibility and not blaming.

Our word can emotionally nourish or emotionally poison our relationships, with ourselves and with others, so it is important to be careful with our word. Even when we say unkind things of others, it affects us as well.

Words are like seeds that are constantly planted within our mind, and we can choose to let the seeds grow with love or with fear.

When we hear an opinion, and agree to it, then it becomes a belief, which has power over us. The power of good or bad.

Gossip is like black magic, as it is pure poison. We believe that gossip connects us, but it doesn't, it is spreading poison. One piece of mis-information can break down communication between people.

#### **Questions:**

- Before reading this chapter, what do you think it would have meant to “be impeccable with your word?” How is what you thought different from what Mr. Ruiz is saying?
- If you are honest with yourself, how are you using your WORD today? Are you creating a dream, or spreading poison? With yourself? With your family? With your friends? With strangers? With your government? With your enemies? Etc.
- Is your mind fertile for seeds of LOVE or FEAR? How can you move out of FEAR and into LOVE?
- How have your unkind words or even thoughts of others, come back to hurt or harm you?
- How have you used your WORD against yourself? How can you use your WORD to nourish yourself instead?
- Ruiz tells the story of the little girl who was singing and her mother told her that she had an ugly voice, so she never sang again. (pages 34-35) Mr. Ruiz referred to this as the parents using “black magic” against their child. Did your parents use an “black magic” against you without knowing? How has it affected you?
- Do you ever gossip? What for? How can you remember this first agreement to refrain from gossiping in the future?
- “Your opinion is nothing but your point of view. It is not necessarily true.” (page 43) Do you ever find yourself stuck in a “my opinion is the truth” kind of discussions? What is the result?
- What IS the word? What DOES it do?
- How will you start being IMPECCABLE WITH YOUR WORD?

### **Chapter Three: The Second Agreement DON'T TAKE ANYTHING PERSONALLY**

#### **Summary:**

Taking things personally only hurts us, and is based on the selfish belief that everything is about “ME” when everything is really about the person who said it. “When you eat other people’s emotional garbage, then it becomes your garbage.”

When we take things personally, we become offended and then defensive. This is how conflict arises (even if it is only internal.)

People don't hurt us, it's our THOUGHTS about what they said or did that hurt us. We are hurting ourselves.

Even the things that we say to ourselves about ourselves are not to be taken personally, as many of our thoughts are actually the opinions of others. We can choose what to believe and what not to believe.

When we refrain from taking things personally, we end our suffering because we are no longer hurting ourselves.

Trusting yourself is more important than trusting others.

Don't worry about the actions of others, only worry about your response to them.

### Questions:

- What have you taken personally that you wish that you hadn't?
- "...you have the need to be right and make everybody wrong." (page 50) Is this true for you? How do you make people wrong? What is the effect on the relationship?
- "It is not what I am saying that is hurting you; it is that you have wounds that I touch by what I have said. You are hurting yourself." (page 51) What do you think of this idea?
- Ruiz says that when we get mad it is because we are dealing with fear. When was the last time you get mad? Can you pinpoint the fear that was feeding the anger?
- What opinions about yourself do you want to change because you don't want to believe them anymore?
- What steps do you take to quiet the unkind thoughts that circle in your mind about yourself?
- Ruiz says that by taking things personally, we perpetuate our suffering. How are you participating in your own suffering?
- What does it mean to trust yourself? What does that look like in real life? Do you agree that it is more important to trust yourself than others?
- What can you take personal responsibility for that you haven't already?

**Write DON'T TAKE ANYTHING PERSONALLY on a piece of paper and put it on your refrigerator.**

## Chapter Four: The Third Agreement

### DON'T MAKE ASSUMPTIONS

#### Summary:

The third agreement is closely tied to the other two. When we make assumptions, we think we KNOW what other people are thinking or doing, when we don't, then we take it personally, and then we lose our ability to be impeccable with our word.

ASSUMPTIONS ⇒ TAKING THINGS PERSONALLY ⇒ NOT BEING IMPECCABLE WITH YOUR WORD (SPREADING POISON)

If we had the courage to ask for clarification, we might be able to end our own suffering, and keep the first two agreements as well. Instead we tend to see what we want to see and hear what we want to hear.

We expect people to be able to read our minds and then get angry when they don't do what we expect them to do.

We are tied to KNOWING and do not like NOT KNOWING, so we make assumptions even without information because we want to KNOW something.

We assume that others are like us, and will see things, hear things, judge things, etc as we do. Instead of being rejected, we just reject ourselves because we assume others will do it eventually.

Love isn't about changing people...love is about accepting people as they are. If others want to change it is because they want to change, not because you want them to change.

Clear communication starts by asking questions and when you have clear communication, all of your relationships can change.

#### Questions:

- What assumptions have you made recently? Have they led to any BIG DRAMA? How did it get resolved (or did it)?

- “All the sadness and drama you have lived in your life was rooted in making assumptions and taking things personally.” (page 64). Do you agree? How so?
- How can you get clarification on some of the assumptions that you are currently making?
- Mr. Ruiz says that we don’t ask for clarification because we are afraid. What do you think you are afraid of? Why? Why? Why?
- Have you destroyed any relationships because you were overly tied to your position? Are you ready or willing to re-build a connection?
- Have you ever tried to change someone? What kind of relationship did you have? Did you use “LOVE” as an excuse for insisting on the change?
- What relationships in your life would you like to improve? What questions can you ask which will help clear up the communication?
- If you are 100% honest with yourself, are you more of a black magician or a white magician? Why?

## **Chapter Five: The Fourth Agreement**

### **ALWAYS DO YOUR BEST**

#### **Summary:**

Always do YOUR best, not THE best. Doing your best can change from moment to moment, and day to day, and will depend on yourself and your circumstances.

When you always do your best, there can be no judgment and comparison, because you know that your best isn’t always the same.

When you do your best, you are doing it because you LOVE it, not because you want some sort of result or reward. When we take action out of love, without expecting a reward, you get more than you had hoped for.

When you do your best, there are no regrets. Doing your best means TAKING ACTION. We often don’t take action and it hurts us, and the reason for that is because we don’t like ourselves.

Forrest Gump is an example of someone who always tried his best and was happy.

Many of us are not happy because we are living in the past or in the future, and not living in the present. Doing your best means living fully in the present by loving yourself and others.

Following the other three agreements is difficult, so it is more important to do your best, and with repetition you will become a master. Everything we learned, we learned through repetition.

Choose to follow the four agreements, and your life will be transformed.

### **Questions:**

- How do you live your best each day?
- Do you ever find yourself getting caught in the compare and despair cycle, with yourself or with others? What affect does it have on you? How can you break the cycle?
- Ruiz says that when we do our best, we have no regrets. Are you living with any regrets right now? How can you let go, practice self- forgiveness, and move beyond the regret?
- Could you like yourself more? What daily practice can you incorporate into your life to enhance you self-likability?
- Are there any actions that you know that you are currently not taking? What is getting in the way? What would help you to move beyond those barriers and into action?
- “Say no when you want to say no, and yes when you want to say yes.” (page 84) Do you have problems saying no? What benefits do you gain when you say YES even when you want to say NO? What are the costs?
- According to Ruiz, our body is a manifestation of God. How do you honor your body? Would you like to honor your body in a different way? If so, how?
- Do you plan to honor THE FOUR AGREEMENTS? How will you keep these agreements in the top of your mind?

## **Chapter Six: The Toltec Path to Freedom Breaking Old Agreements**

### **Summary:**

We all want to have a sense of freedom, but freedom isn't about what we do, it's about the freedom to BE WHO WE ARE. We can learn a lot about freedom from children.

There is a difference between a victim and a warrior. The victim is sad about what happened, whereas the warrior perceives what happened as normal.

There are three masteries to becoming a Toltec: Master of Awareness, Transformation Master of Intent (which includes Master of Love).

To be truly FREE, we need to kill the parasite in our head that is causing our suffering. We can do this in three ways:

### 1) FACE OUR FEARS ONE BY ONE

Become aware of the limiting beliefs and fears that are holding you hostage, and transform by reprogramming your mind. We have become addicted to our false beliefs, so it will take time and repetition to master our new beliefs. We cannot change our old beliefs with less energy than it took to create them in the first place.

### 2) GAIN CONTROL OVER OUR EMOTIONS

When we allow our emotions to control us, rather than for us to control our emotions, we use up all our energy, so we have nothing left to live our lives. Forgiveness is the key to healing.

The answer is not to REPRESS or DISMISS our emotions, though. A warrior has awareness of his/her emotions, and learns to express them at certain moments.

### 3) INITIATE DEATH

Live as if you were to die at any moment. When you do so, you are more likely to live through LOVE and without fear. Everything is on loan from the Angel of Death, so it is best to live in the present.

### Questions:

- What does freedom mean to you? What does it look like for you?
- Are you afraid to play? Afraid of what exactly?

- Do you see your past through the eyes of a victim, a warrior, or somewhere in between? How does that affect your present moment?
- Do you blame your parents for anything? (Be honest with yourself) How can you let go of that blame and lean into forgiveness?
- “Most of the time we do things to please others, just to be accepted by others, rather than living our lives to please ourselves.” (page 98) What kinds of things do you do to please others? What were you taught growing up about pleasing yourself?
- Of the three approaches to attacking and killing your parasite, which one do you plan to take on first?
- What do you think of the idea that none of your beliefs are REAL?
- How can you develop awareness of all the self-limiting, fear-based believes that are making you unhappy?
- What do you do with your emotions? Is that current practice supporting you or not? If not, what can you do instead?
- Imagine for a moment that the angel of death came and took everything that was on loan to you, but left you alive. How would you respond?
- What do you think Ruiz means when he says, “The difference is that we have freedom with wisdom instead of innocence.” (page 121)

## **Chapter Seven: The New Dream Heaven on Earth**

### **Summary:**

Forget everything that you have learned so far in life, and instead use your imagination to create a dream life. Choose to see everything with LOVE.

Give yourself permission to be HAPPY and really ENJOY life.

Give yourself permission to live without FEAR of EXPRESSING YOUR DREAMS.

Give yourself permission to live without FEAR OF BEING JUDGED BY OTHERS.

Give yourself permission to live WITHOUT JUDGING OTHERS.

Give yourself permission to LOVE even if you are not loved in return.

Give yourself permission to TAKE RISKS AND EXPLORE LIFE.

Give yourself permission to LOVE YOURSELF just the way you are.

Even if you don't have a reason to love, you can still love.

Even if you don't have a reason to be happy, you can still choose happiness.

We suffer because we feel safe in our suffering because we know it so well.

**Questions:**

- What are some of the key beliefs that you want to forget that you ever learned? How will your life change if you can drop these beliefs and create new more nourishing ones?
- Put on your LOVE glasses right now. What do you see?
- Of the permissions that I listed above, which one will you start with? Write it down on a piece of paper and put it in your pocket today, or tape it to your computer screen so you see it. Take it out and re-read it throughout the day.
- Do you choose to live in HEAVEN or HELL?